

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 LONDON 05016 251821Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----251834Z 107048 /50

O R 251749Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1983
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

S E C R E T LONDON 05016

EXDIS

FOR EMBASSY CAPE TOWN

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, RH, UK
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: OWEN'S BRIEF

1. EMBASSY OFFICER SAW PHILIP MANSFIELD MARCH 25 TO ASK ABOUT PROGRESS IN PUTTING TOGETHER OWEN'S BRIEF FOR HIS VISIT TO SOUTHERN AFRICA. MANSFIELD EXPLAINED THAT NO PAPER HAS YET BEEN APPROVED AND THAT A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS REMAIN IN THE AIR. OWEN WILL NOT BE BACK IN LONDON UNTIL MONDAY. IF HE IS READY TO MAKE DECISIONS BY THEN HE WILL STILL HAVE TO SEEK PRIME MINISTERIAL CONCURRENCE WHICH SURELY WOULD NOT BE FORTHCOMING BEFORE WEDNESDAY. MANSFIELD CONCLUDED THAT THE FCO PROBABLY WILL NOT BE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE ANYTHING OFFICIAL TO US UNTIL THE SECRETARY'S VISIT HERE AT THE END OF THE WEEK.

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HE SUGGESTED THAT SCHAUFLE MIGHT WANT TO COME TO LONDON ON WEDNESDAY OR THURSDAY TO CONSULT WITH THE FCO AND THEN BRIEF THE SECRETARY ON HIS ARRIVAL.

2. SEVERAL OF THE STICKING POINTS IN DEVELOPING OWEN'S BRIEF EMERGED DURING THE CONVERSATION. SOME STEM FROM OWEN'S OWN INDECISION AND OTHERS FROM FCO RESISTANCE TO

OWEN'S IDEAS. THE FOREIGN SECRETARY APPARENTLY WANTS TO DO MORE DURING HIS TRIP THAN JUST EXPLORE THE IDEA OF NEGOTIATING AN INDEPENDENCE CONSTITUTION FOR RHODESIA. HE WANTS TO BE ABLE TO PROPOSE A TIMETABLE TO ALL THE PARTIES AND TO SUGGEST FORMALLY TO THEM THAT THE UNITED STATES CO-CHAIR THE TALKS. BUT, MANSFIELD POINTED OUT, THE FURTHER ONE GOES INTO THESE PROBLEMS THE MORE DIFFICULT THEY BECOME. OWEN HAS THEREFORE NOT DECIDED WHAT TACK TO TAKE IF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT INSISTS ON EXCLUSIVE OR MAJORITY REPRESENTATION AT A CONFERENCE. NOR WHETHER TALKS WITH THE NATIONALISTS SHOULD PROCEED EVEN IF SMITH REJECTS THE CONCEPT. NOR WHETHER TALKS SHOULD BEGIN AT A TECHNICAL WORKING LEVEL BEFORE EXPANDING TO A POLITICAL LEVEL. NOR HOW TO RESPOND WHEN VORSTER AND SMITH AGAIN PRESS FOR A REFERENDUM TO DETERMINE BLACK LEADERSHIP.

3. IT IS NOT LIKELY THAT THESE QUESTIONS WILL BE RESOLVED WITHOUT FURTHER CONSULTATIONS WITH US. OWEN WILL WANT TO HAVE OUR VIEWS AND OUR GENERAL APPROVAL FOR A TRIP NOW DESIGNED TO BE MORE THAN EXPLORATORY.

4. COMMENT: ONE SENSES THAT RHODESIA HANDS AT THE FCO ARE AT ODDS WITH THE NEW FOREIGN SECRETARY. MANSFIELD IMPLIED THAT OWEN IS SEARCHING FOR THE MAGIC FORMULA ON RHODESIA WHICH HAS ELUDED ALL OTHERS, AND THAT UNLESS RESTRAINED AND EDUCATED THE NEW FOREIGN SECRETARY COULD END UP IN THE SOUP. SPIERS

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NNN

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